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SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

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TAGS: [SNAR](#) [SENV](#) [KCRM](#) [PTER](#) [CO](#)

SUBJECT: NAS Monthly Report May 2005: Aerial Eradication
Still At Record Levels

11. (SBU) Summary: In May, the spray program eradicated 11,305 hectares of coca and 45 hectares of poppy. The Colombian National Police (CNP) and Colombian Navy accomplished the largest cocaine HCL fast boat seizure ever-over 15 metric tons. During May, the CNP seized over 18 metric tons of cocaine HCL/cocaine base and destroyed three cocaine HCL laboratories.

Eradication and Interdiction

12. (SBU) Eradication: During May, OV-10s operating from Apiay, Meta Department, sprayed approximately 1,604 hectares of coca. AT-802s operating from Caucausia, Antioquia Department, sprayed approximately 8,508 hectares of coca. T-65s operating from Popayan, Cauca Department, and later from Valledupar, Cesar Department, sprayed 45 hectares of poppy and 1,193 hectares of coca. In total, CNP aircraft sprayed approximately 11,305 hectares of coca and 45 hectares of poppy during the month of May. Thus far in 2005 the CNP eradication program has sprayed more than 85,620 hectares of coca and 979 hectares of poppy.

13. (SBU) Armed narco-terrorists fired on eradication and COLAR aircraft eight times in May, resulting in 18 individual impacts. The AT-802's were struck once and OV-10's 11 times. They also hit Plan Colombia Program UH-1N helicopters six times.

14. (SBU) During May, COLAR Plan Colombia helicopters continued to support CD Brigade troops and eradication operations in Caucausia and Apiay, as well as training operations in Tolemaida. Plan Colombia helicopters transported 2,609 passengers and 151,665 pounds of cargo during 1,980 flight hours. Twenty-seven patients required 108 hours of flight time for medical evacuations.

15. (SBU) On May 31, the Plan Colombia helicopter program deployed 5 UH-1HII aircraft to Saravena, Arauca Department, to protect the 174 kilometers of petroleum pipeline in Arauca Department under the Infrastructure Security Strategy Program. These aircraft will support a Quick Reaction Force trained to respond to attacks along the pipeline.

16. (SBU) On May 5, Plan Colombia helicopters were used to conduct a joint air assault with elements of the 1st Battalion, CD Brigade on two FARC bases in the vicinity of Tumaco, Narino Department. The Plan Colombia support package of three UH-60 Black Hawks, four gun ships, and one command and control (C2) aircraft ferried the troops to field operations areas. Colombian forces captured seven prisoners, 32 kilograms of cocaine base, and several thousand gallons of liquid precursor chemicals, all without injury to personnel or aircraft.

17. (SBU) The OV-10 aircraft were shut down for a 10-day maintenance period to improve availability rates of OV-10 spray aircraft. During this time, all personnel attended refresher safety classes and aircrews and search and rescue personnel received additional survival and evasion training.

18. (SBU) The U.S. Military Group and their Training Assistance Fielding Team (TAFT), working in conjunction with the NAS Aviation Unit, established a Basic Instrumentation Course for all Colombian Army pilots that had not completed the Basic Instrument Training Course during their Initial Entry Rotary Wing courses. This ensures that every pilot operating Plan Colombia helicopters is trained to U.S. standards.

19. (SBU) From May 2-16 an INL Air Wing Aviation Resource Management Survey inspected in-country Air Wing programs. They inspected records for safety, standardization, security, operations, administration, logistics, maintenance, training, armament, and non-rated crewmember personnel. They noted only a few minor discrepancies.

110. (SBU) Interdiction: In May, the CNP seized a total of over 18 Metric Tons of HCL and cocaine base and destroyed

three cocaine HCL labs. To date, in 2005 the CNP has seized more than 44 Metric Tons of HCL and 397 kilos of heroin and destroyed 66 HCL laboratories.

11. (SBU) During May, the CNP and Colombian Navy made the largest single cocaine HCL seizure ever, over 15 metric tons. CNP intelligence, supported by the Embassy, indicated the presence of a storage site on the Mira River in Narino Department. Upon arriving at the site the CNP forces observed that the cocaine HCL had already been loaded on go-fast boats.

12. (SBU) The CNP, led by NAS-supported Junglas, Carabineros, and aircraft, deployed to Cordoba Department and conducted a major operation May 24-27 to capture Diego Fernando Murillo, aka "Don Berna", the third ranking AUC (paramilitary) leader in Colombia. He is wanted for multiple homicides, terrorism, and is extraditable for narco-trafficking. "Don Berna" surrendered and is now under a form of house arrest. On June 9, 2005, the Embassy transmitted to the Government of Colombia a request for Murillo's extradition.

13. (SBU) On May 30, the Colombian National Police (DIRAN and Carabineros), conducted a joint operation with the Colombian Air Force against Diego Montoya, leader of the Norte de Valle Cartel. Diego Montoya eluded capture, but four of his AUC security forces were killed in the assault.

14. (SBU) In Espinal, Tolima, the four-month Jungle Commando basic course entered its final phase. Fifty-five new "Junglas" will graduate on June 10. The US Army 7th Special Forces began a three-week Sniper Course for 20 police students. The Anti-Narcotics Police began an 18-week medical course for 33 students. Additionally, 35 DIRAN, 11 Carabineros, and 12 Colombian Army personnel departed for various training courses in the United States.

DIRAN Base Defense

15. (SBU) DIRAN completed base defense upgrades at Villagarzon and San Miguel, Putumayo Department, and Toribio, Cauca. During May, DIRAN instructors began Road Interdiction Inspection equipment training.

Law Enforcement/Public Security

16. (SBU) During May the CNP EMCAR (Carabineros) squadrons captured 483 individuals (36 Narco-traffickers, 53 FARC/ELN, 30 AUC and 364 common criminals), 171 weapons, 5,197 gals of liquid precursors, 15,182 kilograms of solid precursors, 2,108 kilograms of marihuana and 24 kilograms of cocaine base. They also manually eradicated 11 hectares of poppy and 825 hectares of coca (this includes the amounts reported by the units in support of the manual eradication groups). On May 17, the CNP National Training Center at Espinal graduated three new squadrons. The school also graduated 11 new Basic EMCAR Course instructors.

17. (SBU) During the first week of May, the FARC attacked the Tolima EMCAR Squadron and killed three EMCAR police officers near Ibagu, the capital of Tolima Department. Reinforcements immediately helped secure the area. On May 19, the FARC attacked a pipeline in Putumayo. When the EMCAR reacted, they walked into an ambush using Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) which killed three EMCAR police officers. Later in the day, approximately 70 guerrillas ambushed the Choco EMCAR Squadron using IEDs and gunfire. Ten police officers were killed and three EMCAR members were able to escape. The guerrillas executed the wounded police officers.

Air Bridge Denial (ABD)

18. (SBU) CNP followed 3011 aircraft contacts over Colombia; 37 were declared Unidentified, Assumed Suspect (UAS). JIATF-S declared five contacts as friendly and one invalid. Of the 31 remaining, the GOC reacted to 18 UAS but located none. The GOC did not react to 13 UAS: two due to bad weather, five suspects reached international borders, four were in international waters, one track relied on old information, and one aircraft was out of range.

CNP Aviation (ARAVI)

19. (SBU) In May, the three largest components of ARAVI's fleet clocked 1,465 mission hours. The UH-1H helicopters flew 468 mission hours with an operational readiness (O.R.) rate of 43 percent. Thirty-one percent of the helicopters required depot level major structural repairs. Bell 212 helicopters flew 172 mission hours with an operational readiness rate of 71 percent, and UH-60 helicopters flew 121

mission hours with an operational readiness rate of 75 percent. ARAVI aircraft and personnel supported extradition, interdiction and high value target missions, including the pursuit of AUC official Diego Murillo (alias "Don Berna" or "Adolfo Paz"). Representatives from INL, NAS, Lockheed Martin, and Lockheed's subcontractor met in Fort Lauderdale May 25-26 for a program management review. The team identified 46 priority action items, including the purchase of USD 1.12 million in Black Hawk spare parts, for the coming three months.

Port Security

120. (SBU) DIRAN's new 12-member polygraph unit, established to ensure the integrity of police working in the airports and seaports, completed training May 21. After an orientation period at the airports and seaports they will begin polygraphing police officers under the guidance of a polygraphist from U.S. Customs and Immigration Enforcement (ICE).

Environment

121. (SBU) In May, the spray complaints group received 40 complaints and is investigating 104 other cases. No complaints were paid during the month. NAS Environmental Officer assisted the DIRAN chief of eradication with answers during a one-hour live interview explaining the aerial eradication program and scientific studies regarding any potential environmental and health impact on Colombia. With NAS funding, 10 DIRAN police specialists started a course in advanced satellite imagery analysis at the University Militaire in Bogota. The office has also engaged in several public meetings with NGO's to discuss the eradication program. DIRAN and NAS distributed the first of the new GOC field guides to all military and police forces to identify and report the location of coca and poppy fields they may encounter. During May, the Medical Civilian Action Program (MEDCAP) sent groups of approximately 25 doctors each to Saravena and Arauca City, Arauca Department, and Miraflores, Guaviare Department, to provide free medical and surgical assistance and monitor the health of the population.

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